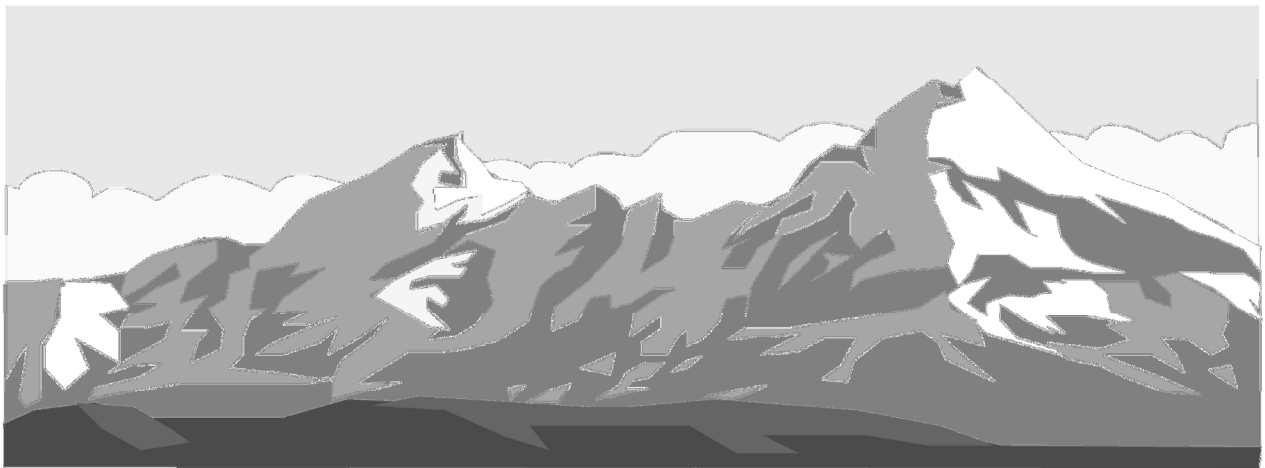


**Forest Plan
Monitoring and Evaluation Report
FISCAL YEARS 2008-2010
April 2012**

**Flathead
National
Forest**



INTRODUCTION

The Flathead Land Management and Resource Plan, commonly known as the Forest Plan, was approved in January 1986 and established management direction for a 10-15 year period. This direction was the result of a comprehensive analysis of land capabilities, public issues, and environmental effects along with a balancing of legal requirements. The Flathead National Forest continues to implement activities consistent with the original direction while adapting direction to address resource concerns where new direction was necessary. Examples of these are: Amendment 19 (1997) that established new direction for grizzly bear habitat and timber management, Amendment 21 (1999), that amended wildlife and vegetation direction for old growth forests, and the Northern Rockies Lynx Management Direction (2007). These amendments also included their own monitoring and reporting requirements.

Information from our monitoring reports and other assessments has been useful in assuring our on-going implementation of the Forest Plan is consistent with applicable law, regulations, and agency policy. The Flathead National Forest developed an Analysis of the Management Situation (January 2004), which also serves as a valuable source of monitoring and evaluation information to assist us in identifying what needs to change during Forest Plan revision.

This report evaluates the field data and information collected and/or available up to the end of September 30, 2010. Many monitoring elements have been valuable in describing the effects from the management of the Flathead National Forest. However, there have been elements that did not achieve the level of utility most likely envisioned for them. Many of the monitoring elements are also addressed in the Analysis of the Management Situation which is available on the Flathead's website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/flathead/>

The purpose of monitoring is to determine answers to the following questions:

- Are we doing what the Forest Plan envisioned (implementation monitoring)?
- Are we seeing the effects and outputs predicted in the Forest Plan (effectiveness monitoring)?
- Are the standards working (validation monitoring)?
- Do we need to adjust practices to meet the standards?
- Does the monitoring process need adjusting?

Our monitoring and evaluation program has found that monitoring most of the items worked well in terms of informing us of the overall effects of our management. There are still some monitoring items that lack a sound basis on which to inform our management actions. Some monitoring elements are useful to validate that existing management direction is appropriate. We have found over the last 25 years, that land management occurs in complex and changing situations, and our results will not always be totally predictable, definitive, or certain. Many things, including natural events that cannot be predicted, affect management results.

Monitoring and evaluation information is constantly evaluated for project level work and is being used as we work on revising our Forest Plan. A new notice of intent to complete an environmental impact statement (EIS) is expected to be issued in 2013 and revision of our Forest Plan is proceeding with a Draft EIS and Draft Forest Plan scheduled to be available in 2015.